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University of Northern Iowa Graduate Council Minutes, October 8, 2015

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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1048

UNI Graduate Council Minutes from October 8, 2015

Present: Shahina Amin, Melissa Beall, Maureen Clayton, Barbara Cutter, Debbie Deemer, Kavita Dhanwada, Sadik Kucuksari, Gayle Pohl, Leila Rod-Welch, Susie Schwieger

Absent: Fernando Calderon, Fabio Fontana, Carly Hanson, Cindy Juby, Dan Power, Jolene Teske

Clayton called the meeting to order at 3:30. Pohl moved (second by Deemer) to approve the minutes from September 24th; motion passed.

Graduate College Reports:

Dhanwada reported that discussions are underway as to how UNI will respond to the new HLC rule that requires credentialing of faculty by September 2017. This issue will affect some associate graduate faculty as well as graduate TAs. There will be continued conversations here and in the colleges about this issue.

Cutter reminded council members that Summer Fellowship applications are due on October 23rd. She also noted that GCCC has approved the COE curriculum packet; information will be sent to council members prior to the next meeting.

Schwieger reported that the personal statement workshop on Wednesday, October 14 has been moved to a larger venue to accommodate student demand. She encouraged faculty and students to attend the graduate student social mixer (and kickoff to the symposium) on Monday, October 26 from 4:30-6:00 in Maucker Union. She also requested that programs submit ideas and articles for the graduate student news; the purpose is to get recognition for graduate students.

Beall asked council members to submit names or ideas for future Brown Bag Seminars.

Clayton reported that the CBA and CSBS curriculum packages passed through email votes (7-0-1).

New Business:

Pohl moved and Amin seconded a motion to approve the curriculum packet from CHAS. Motion passed 6-0-1.

Cutter initiated a discussion of the procedural issues related to the new curriculum cycle. The main point is that the timeline is very tight, especially with respect to the approval of new degrees, majors and programs. She asked if the council had suggestions for altering the current system in which Graduate Council approval follows

approval by the Graduate College Curriculum Committee (GCCC) and precedes docketing by the Faculty Senate. Could the Graduate Council delegate its authority to the GCCC, or have a different process or different schedule? Discussion ensued about the history and procedures of having Graduate Council approval; it has not always been a rubber stamp. Several members mentioned the importance of preserving the authority of the Graduate Council. Cutter mentioned that keeping the Graduate Council in the approval pathway will likely require additional meetings and the need to review curriculum in the summer. General agreement was reached to revisit this issue in the future if it would allow the Graduate Council to focus on other activities.

Cutter asked for input from the council on a specific case in which an associate graduate faculty member with a doctorate but in a term position has been serving as the defacto advisor for a master's thesis student. The job description under which the faculty member was hired includes advising students conducting thesis research. An exception to the graduate faculty constitution has been requested so that this faculty member can serve as the advisor (along with two other committee members) for this master's student, who is expected to graduate this academic year. Additionally, the faculty member has just recently been asked to serve as one of the four committee members for an Ed.D. student.

A discussion ensued, in which several issues were raised. Although the job ad erroneously described the position duties, the faculty member and student were both acting in good faith. As the student and faculty member have been working together on the thesis research, we have an obligation to allow the student to complete his/her degree in a timely fashion. Concerns were raised about what would happen to the student if s/he did not complete the degree during the faculty member's term. Rod-Welch mentioned the possibility of having co-chairs, and Kucuksari asked about the timing of formally declaring committee members. Clayton asked how the Graduate College could ensure that job ads were correct in the future. She also noted that some programs currently do not have enough faculty to support the enrolled students, and asked what the Graduate College planned to do about this. Pohl moved (Beall seconded) to make an exception in this particular case to allow the faculty member to serve as the sole chair of the student's thesis committee. Motion passed by a vote of 5-1. Consensus was reached that the request for an exception to the rules with respect to the composition of the doctoral committee was denied.

A brief discussion about the positions of Graduate Dean and Associate Dean followed. When asked about the potential for the Dean and Associate Dean to teach a class in addition to their administrative duties, Dhanwada and Cutter both felt that this is a good way to stay connected to students. Dhanwada cautioned that there can be timing conflicts, and said that the effectiveness of this type of position would depend on the responsibilities and expectations of the Dean. She did mention that discussion was underway surrounding the position of Director of Undergraduate Studies. Three programs (Academic Advising, Honors Program, Academic Learning Center) that now report directly to the Associate Provost and Graduate Dean will report to the Director of

Undergraduate Studies, freeing up some additional time for the duties of Graduate Dean. There was also a brief discussion of a recommendation regarding the interim label for the Graduate College leadership positions. Clayton recommended that the council members consult with their constituents so that the discussion could continue at the next meeting. Discussion on the role of the Graduate Council will also take place at that time.

Next meeting is October 22nd at 3:30 in Lang 115.

Meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.